



Town of Zionsville

Social Media Employee Policy

PURPOSE: This policy is intended to provide guidance to Town of Zionsville employees and to clarify boundaries between appropriate and inappropriate use of social media by Town employees. Social media can be a fun and rewarding way to share your life and opinions with family, friends, and co-workers around the world. However, use of social media and digital photography/video presents certain risks and carries with it certain responsibilities. Nothing in this policy is intended to restrict an employee's right to discuss matters of public concern as a private citizen, nor to engage in concerted activity with co-workers.

Town employees have an obligation to avoid being perceived as a spokesperson for the Town of Zionsville. This policy is intended to address issues specific to the Town of Zionsville employees.

DEFINITIONS:

Blog: A self-published diary or commentary on a particular topic that may allow visitors to post responses, reactions, or comments.

Digital Photography/Video: Any image or video digitally captured using a cell phone, digital camera, scanner, or other digital imaging device that can be digitally shared or reproduced.

Employee: Refers to any sworn or civilian employee, volunteer, or any other approved representative of the Town of Zionsville.

Post: Content a user shares on a social media site or the act of publishing content on a site.

Profile: Information that a user provides about himself or herself on a social networking site.

Social Media: A category of Internet based resources that enable the user to generate content and encourage other user participation. This includes but is not limited to: Facebook, Myspace, Twitter, YouTube, Wikipedia, blogs, and other sites.

Social Networks: Platforms where users can create profiles, share information, and socialize with others using a range of technologies.

Speech: Expression or communication of thoughts or opinions in spoken words, in writing, by expressive conduct, symbolism, photographs, videotape, or related forms of communication.

CODE OF CONDUCT: Every employee has the right to freedom of speech. However, you are solely responsible for what you post online. When engaging in social media or social networking activities, all employees must maintain a level of professionalism, in both working hours and off hours conduct, which is consistent with the mission of the Town of Zionsville. Before creating online content, consider some of the risks and rewards that are involved. The publication of any statement, comment, imagery, or information through any medium of communication which is potentially adverse to the operation, morale, or efficiency of the Town of Zionsville will be deemed to be a violation of this policy. Inappropriate postings or images that may include discriminatory remarks, harassment, threats of violence, as well as similar improper and/or unlawful conduct will not be tolerated and will be subject to disciplinary action.

Be respectful

Always be fair and courteous to fellow employees, residents, customers, suppliers, or people who work on behalf of the Town of Zionsville. Also, keep in mind that you are more likely to resolve work related complaints by speaking directly with your co-workers and/or supervisors than to post complaints to social media. Avoid using statements, photographs, video, or audio that could reasonably be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening, or intimidating, that disparage residents, customers, employees, associates, or suppliers, or that might constitute harassment or bullying.

Be honest and accurate

Always be honest and accurate when posting information, news, video or digital photography. Remember that sites on the Internet archive almost everything; therefore, even deleted postings and photos could be searched and/or found at any time. Never post any information or rumors that you know to be false about the Town of Zionsville, fellow employees, customers, residents, suppliers, or people working on behalf of the Town of Zionsville.

Post only appropriate and respectful content

Maintain the confidentiality of Town of Zionsville, its employees, customers and residents. Do not post internal reports, policies, procedures or other internal business-related communications. Also, do not post digital photography or video of emergency incident scenes or public education events without permission of their respective Department Head or his/her designee. Digital photography or video taken at town functions, facilities, or in Town department uniform should be within good taste and not reflect negatively on the Town of Zionsville or its employees.

- 1) No employee, while speaking as a private citizen on a matter of public concern regarding the Town of Zionsville, shall speak in such a way as to cause actual harm or disruption to the operations of the Town of Zionsville.

- 2) Employees may speak on a matter of public concern as a spokesperson for the Town of Zionsville only with permission from the Town Manager or his/her designee except for:
 - a) The Public Information Officer (PIO), who is a designated spokesperson for the Zionsville Fire Department and/or Zionsville Police Department pre-authorized to speak on matters of public safety concern.
- 3) Employees may not create any social media accounts or websites representing the Town of Zionsville without first obtaining the written permission from their respective Department Head and concurrence from the Town Manager.
 - a) All employees shall, at all times, exercise diligence to avoid representing themselves as a spokesperson for the Town of Zionsville, except when duly authorized.
- 4) Off-hours use of social networking
 - a) Town of Zionsville name, logos, and unapproved Town images are not to be used for personal social media websites, chat rooms, instant messaging programs, or any other electronic media.
 - b) Town of Zionsville department uniforms are not to be worn while participating in personal photo/video chats.
 - c) Employees are responsible for the content that appears on their personally maintained social media accounts or social networking sites, and will be obligated to remove any posting or material, even if posted by others, that reflects negatively on the Town of Zionsville.
 - d) The Town of Zionsville discourages staff in management/supervisory roles from initiating "friend" requests with employees they manage. Managers/supervisors may accept friend requests if initiated by the employee, and if the manager/supervisor does not believe it will negatively impact the work relationship.
 - e) Sexually graphic or explicit material of any kind shall not be posted by employees on any form of social networking site. Material posted by others on the employee's social media sites shall immediately be removed by the employee.
- 5) Working hours use of social networking
 - a) No employee will use social media while operating at an emergency incident, while involved in emergency operations training, or while responding to a call for service in a Town of Zionsville vehicle.
 - i) *Exception: the Public Information Officer (PIO) or designated spokesperson at an emergency incident may post important public information updates using official Town social media accounts and other public information sites.*
 - b) Ensure that your social media activity does not interfere with your work commitments

If you have any question about social media and/or appropriate use, please contact your immediate supervisor for guidance.